

lose funding because these workers have lost their jobs and because this plant has closed, what it does to our country as a whole when we have this kind of trade deficit. We understand that. That is why those of us opposed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement want to throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA and want to negotiate a trade agreement that will lift workers up in Central America, while promoting prosperity here at home.

There is no reason that our trade agreements need to look like this, need to have a result like this. Instead, Congress can move forward in passing a fair trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the Majority Leader, the most powerful Republican in the U.S. Congress, and the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) both promised to vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by the end of May.

Now, if you will look at this chart you will see that the end of May happens to be the 1-year anniversary of when CAFTA was sent to Congress. So, Mr. Speaker, we should vote no on the Central American Free Trade Agreement; bury this trade agreement, and pass a trade agreement that is good for American workers and American communities.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last year President Bush put Social Security reform on the national agenda. His proposal to save Social Security by giving younger Americans the choice to choose personal savings accounts has been met, to date, by ridicule and silence by the loyal opposition in this Congress. The ridicule has taken a variety of forms, denouncing the President's motives and intentions. The intentions of Republicans have been described by some outside organizations as an effort to tear down the house of public retirement in America.

Beyond that slur, there has just been, to date, simply silence. No ideas, no counterproposals, nothing to deal with what many refer to as a generational tsunami heading for Social Security, as some 40 million Americans over the age of 65 within 20 years will become 80 million Americans over the age of 65.

I say silence with hesitation, Mr. Speaker, because that actually ended yesterday among the loyal opposition when the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) introduced his legislation at a press event in his home State, where he unveiled a bill which he described as Social Security forever, saying, admirably, "I believe it is time for Democrats to offer an alternative to the President."

And to the gentleman from Florida, I say with admiration, I could not agree more. I admire him for his leadership on behalf of his vision of government and also his honesty as he proposes to cure what ails Social Security in the next 50 to 75 years with that anecdote that Democrats run to most often, and that is, namely, higher taxes. The Wexler bill, with a 6 percent tax increase on income over \$90,000 a year would be the largest marginal tax rate increase in a generation.

Let us be clear about this, Mr. Speaker. House conservatives will vigorously oppose any effort to finance Social Security reform by raising taxes on working families, small businesses, and family farms. Thanks to the Wexler proposal, the American people now see a very clear choice before them, the President and the Republican Congress's vision for reform and the single Democrat vision that has been articulated, higher taxes. With one of the largest marginal tax increases in a generation, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER's) Social Security forever bill looks more like higher taxes forever.

It is time for this Congress to move on to the substance of Social Security reform. Let us offer our conflicting visions in this chamber across the aisle and move forward to save and secure and reform Social Security for our children and our grandchildren.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord, Your word is founded in truth and Your just decrees are everlasting.

So our fleeting days and our passing tasks are truly significant only if they are grounded in You.

Eternal God, You are the wellspring of creativity for Your people. You are forever liberating us from blinding evil; so be with Congress today.

Ennoble every compromise rooted in compassion; and strengthen every commitment measured by righteous decisions in this body.

Just as there cannot be true worship in Your sight without sacrifice and conversion of heart; nor can there be true politics without principle. Free us,

Lord, to amend our ways so that we will search for what is truly right and just; lest we become lost in endless possibilities born only from self-centered imagination.

Lord God, in the land of the free we hold ourselves accountable to You both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SOLIS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPEND IT WISELY

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELAY. Madam Speaker, this week the House will uphold, for the 216th time, its constitutionally mandated responsibility to begin the process of funding the Federal Government.

The Founding Fathers understood the power of the purse and that that power of the purse was government's most potent, and therefore installed that power first and foremost in the body most accountable to the American people, the House of Representatives.

In the 10 years Republicans have controlled the House appropriations process, we have fundamentally changed the way we spend the people's money.

We have based this process on an entirely new question: no longer "How much can we spend?" but "How much should we spend?" That may seem like a very small matter, but it has saved our government and our economy billions of dollars and millions of jobs over the last decade.

The fiscal accountability our Republican majority instituted helped balance the budget in the late 1990s, helped ensure the recession of 2001 was the shallowest in memory, and helped ensure our recovery from that recession and the 9/11 attacks was strong and durable.

This week we will begin our second decade protecting the American people's money, and our first year with our streamlined Committee on Appropriations, by taking up the first two spending bills for the 2006 fiscal year.

First, the homeland security spending bill will provide the resources our